

REMARKS

Claims 47, 48, 50-52, 55-57, and 62-65 are pending in the application. By this amendment, claims 62 and 64 are amended to place them into independent format, and the rest of the pending claims are cancelled. Applicants request reconsideration and allowance in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Information Disclosure Statement

The Office Action indicates that the listing and discussion of prior art references in the Background section of the application does not constitute a proper Information Disclosure Statement. One of the two listed references (Okada et al., U.S. 5,593,002) has been cited and applied by the Examiner already and is thus fully of record. The other reference is listed on an Information Disclosure Statement filed herewith.

Drawing Objection

The drawings are objected to for not showing a controller as recited in the claims. (The claims actually refer to further actuating the valve according to a “control mechanism,” which is what is referred to in the specification; Applicants believe this is the “offending” language to which the Examiner refers.) Rather than amending the drawings to show schematically (e.g., as a generic box) a controller or control mechanism, Applicants have simply struck the language from the claim as not required. Accordingly, Applicants submit the objection is overcome.

Specification Corrections

The Office Action notes a few obvious typographical errors in the specification. Applicants appreciate the Examiner’s careful attention to the application and have corrected the noted errors, along with a few others. (No new matter has been introduced.)

Prior Art-Based Rejections

Claims 48, 50-52, 55-57, and 65 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Doolittle, U.S. 5,713,429. Claims 47, 55-57, and 63 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as

obvious based on Okada, U.S. 5,539,002. The rejections are moot in view of cancellation of those claims.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 62 and 64 are objected to as depending from rejected base claims but are otherwise indicated to be directed to allowable subject matter. Claims 62 and 64 have been rewritten in independent form, and the rest of the claims have been cancelled. Accordingly, all remaining claims are in condition for allowance, and timely Notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

The undersigned representative requests any extension of time that may be deemed necessary to further the prosecution of this application.

The undersigned representative authorizes the Commissioner to charge any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.16 or 1.17 that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 14-1437, referencing Attorney Docket No.: 6730.056.NPUS00.

In order to facilitate the resolution of any issues or questions presented by this paper, the Examiner may directly contact the undersigned by phone to further the discussion.

Novak, Druce & Quigg, LLP
1000 Louisiana, Suite 5300
Houston, Texas 77002
(713) 571-3400
(713) 456-2836 (fax)
tracy.druce@novakdruce.com

Respectfully submitted,



Tracy W. Druce, Esq.
Reg. No. 35,493